



Council of Medical  
Specialty Societies

Council of Medical Specialty Societies  
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July 7, 2020

The Honorable Eugene Scalia, Secretary, Department of Labor  
The Honorable Chad Wolf, Secretary Department of Homeland Security  
The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary, Department of State  
The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services

**RE: Proclamation Suspending Entry of Aliens Who Present a Risk to the U.S. Labor Market Following the Coronavirus Outbreak**

Dear Secretary Scalia, Secretary Wolf, Secretary Pompeo, and Secretary Azar:

On behalf of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), thank you for your leadership in addressing the health concerns and economic hardships experienced by all Americans as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CMSS believes that it is in our nation's interest to protect the health of all Americans. Doing so depends on a diverse group of health professionals and researchers who bring scientific and medical expertise to the forefront, assuring the highest quality of patient care. Maintaining a robust health care workforce in the United States that is capable of addressing the health needs of Americans is heavily reliant on international medical graduates who are citizens of other nations (non-US IMGs). These non-US IMGs represent more than 25% of the physician workforce in our country. Nearly 21,000,000 Americans live in an area where at least one-half of the physicians are foreign-trained<sup>12</sup>. Non-US IMGs are training and mentoring the next generation of U.S. physicians and helping to develop new treatments. In May, CMSS reached out to [Congress](#) with recommendations on how to maintain the nation's health workforce by retaining physicians currently in the United States and by expediting entrance of physicians into the country.

With more than 800,000 physicians across 45 specialties, CMSS expresses grave concern regarding President Trump's recent executive order suspending some immigration visas for the rest of the year. This executive order, which suspends the issuance of new visas including H-1B and some J-1 visas, will limit our country's ability to attract talented clinicians, researchers, and educators from around the world, which will impact our future health care workforce and hinder important progress in biomedical research, ultimately harming public health.

As you establish standards to define categories of immigrants covered by section 3(b)(iv) of the proclamation as mandated in Section 4(i), we urge you to clarify that all health care professionals

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bU.S.inessinsider.com/foreign-doctors-roadblocks-to-helping-with-U.S.-coronaviU.S.-pandemic-2020-4?utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=cfasnews&utm\\_content=newsletter](https://www.bU.S.inessinsider.com/foreign-doctors-roadblocks-to-helping-with-U.S.-coronaviU.S.-pandemic-2020-4?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=cfasnews&utm_content=newsletter)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/foreign-trained-doctors-are-critical-serving-many-us-communities>

and researchers—not only those who are involved in COVID-19 research and practice—are critical to our nation’s interest, and therefore exempt from the executive order. It is critical not to endanger patient care and our research enterprise by closing our borders to skilled health and science professionals during this pandemic and beyond. These health care and research professionals are necessary to maintain a strong health care workforce able to address the nation’s health challenges and to facilitate the immediate and continued economic recovery of the United States.

Again, thank you. CMSS and the specialty society signatories below sincerely appreciate your attention to this critical matter. To provide optimal healthcare for all Americans during this pandemic and beyond, CMSS urges you to establish standards and categories that maintain the nation’s robust health care workforce.

If you have any questions, or if CMSS can offer any further information or assistance, please contact Dr. Helen Burstin, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, at [hburstin@cmss.org](mailto:hburstin@cmss.org).

Sincerely,

**Council of Medical Specialty Societies**

Council of Medical Specialty Societies Member Signatories:

American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American College of Physicians  
American Epilepsy Society  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Radiation Oncology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Thoracic Society  
Association for Clinical Oncology  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
North American Spine Society  
Society for Vascular Surgery  
Society of Interventional Radiology  
Society of Thoracic Surgeons